

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 HA-02 H-03 IO-06 INR-05  
CIAE-00 NSAE-00 CA-01 PM-03 DODE-00 L-01 PA-01  
/043 W

-----075976 110026Z /73/20

P R 081040Z SEP 78

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8087

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 9571

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PGH SEVEN)

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF

SUBJ: UNHCR BRIEFING ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES-SEPTEMBER 20, 1978

IN KUALA LUMPUR

REF: (A) STATE 215855 (B) KUALA LUMPUR 9456

(C) BANGKOK 25291 (D) KUALA LUMPUR 9306

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. GOM WELCOMES FORTHCOMING KUALA LUMPUR  
MEETING WITH UNHCR HARTLING, ATTACHES SIGNIFICANT IMPORTANCE  
TO IT, AND WILL PARTICIPATE WITH FAIRLY STRONG DELEGATION.  
THEY APPEAR RELATIVELY OPENMINDED ON A SUBSEQUENT HIGHER-  
LEVEL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AND ON A POSSIBLE DIRECT  
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ASEAN APPROACH TO THE EEC ON REFUGEES. WE OURSELVES  
SHOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS OUR REQUESTED LEGISLATION  
FOR A PERMANENT PROGRAM, THE POSSIBILITY OF GREATER CE  
NUMBERS, AND THE MOVMENT OF LRP REFUGEES (AS WELL  
AS SPECIFIC COORDINATION PROBLEMS THE SECOND DAY).  
END SUMMARY.

2. IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARA 11 REF A, I MET WITH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA) SECRETARY GENERAL TRAN SRI ZAKARIA SEPTEMBER 8 TO OUTLINE OUR THINKING ON THE FORTHCOMING KUALA LUMPUR MEETING WITH UNHCR HARTLING AND TO SOLICIT GOM VIEWS THEREON. I DESCRIBED THE PURPOSES OF THE MEETING AS WE SEE THEM AND NOTED THAT OUR MAIN OBJECTIVE IN THIS AND ANY SUBSEQUENT MEETING WAS THE SIGNIFICANT INCREASE OF RESETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITIES, AS WELL AS IMPROVED COORDINATION OF CURRENT EFFORTS OF ALL COUNTRIES CONCERNED. I INDICATED THAT WE SEE THIS MEETING WITH HARTLING AS LOW-KEY, EXPLORATORY, AND INFORMATIONAL, WITH A VIEW TO CONSIDERING A HIGHER-LEVEL INTERNATIONAL MEETING SUBSEQUENTLY. I NOTED THAT I WOULD BE ATTENDING THE MEETING ALONG WITH LOWMAN FROM WASHINGTON.

3. ZAKARIA SAID THE GOM WELCOMES THE MEETING WITH HARTLING AND CONSIDERS IT MORE THAN "JUST A BRIEFING", WITH ALL PARTICIPANTS PRESENTING THEIR VIEWS TO HARTLING AND EACH OTHER--THIS IS WHAT THE GOM INTENDS TO DO. HE SAID THE GOM DOES NOT CONSIDER THE MEETING TO BE "LOW KEY" TERMS OF ITS IMPORTANCE, TO WHICH I REPLIED THAT THIS WAS IN REFERENCE TO PUBLIC ATTENTION, NOT THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MEETING ITSELF. ZAKARIA SAID THE GOM CONFIDENTIAL

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WOULD BE REPRESENTED BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE, SUPPORTED BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE MFA.

4. I ASKED ZAKARIA'S VIEWS ON A POSSIBLE BROADER INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOLLOWING THE KUALA LUMPUR MEETING WHICH WOULD BE DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE GREATER NUMBERS OF RESETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITIES AMONG A WIDER SEPCTRUM OF RECEIVING COUNTRIES. ZAKARIA SAID THE GOM WOULD BE WILLING TO CONSIDER THIS, BUT THAT HE COULD NOT SAY NOW WHAT THE GOM'S POSITION WOULD BE. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION AS TO WHETHER MALAYSIA OR ASEAN HAD MADE ANY DIRECT APPROACHES TO THE OTHER COUNTRIES ON THIS, HE REPLIED THAT THEY RELIED ON THE UNHCR PRIMARILY AND THE FIRST TIME ASEAN HAD DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH ANYONE ELSE WAS IN WASHINGTON RECENTLY AT THE DIALOGUE WITH THE U.S. I ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBILIITY OF ASEAN RAISING IT AT THE FORTHCOMING DIALOGUE WITH THE EEC, AND ZAKARIA INDICATED THAT MIGHT WELL BD DONE, AND THAT HE PERSONALLY WOULD FAVOR DOING SO SINCE THE EEC INCLUDED POTENTIAL

RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES.

5. ZAKARIA SAID THAT THE GOM HAD NO SIGNIFICANT COORDINATION PROBLEMS WITH EITHER UNHCR OR THE U.S. AND OTHER RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES OPERATING HERE.

6. I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE WITH ZAKARIA OUR CONCERN ABOUT REPORTED INCIDENTS OF MALAYSIAN AUTHORITIES TURNING AWAY REFUGEES AND OF APPARENTLY STRICTER MEASURES IN GENERAL REGARDING GRANTING OF ASYLUM (AS REPORTED REF B). ZAKARIA SAID HE WAS NOT AWARE OF THESE SPECIFIC INCIDENTS BUT REITERATED THAT GOM POLICY HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO ENCOURAGE SEAWORTHY REFUGEE BOATS TO CONTINUE ON  
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RATHER THAN LAND IN MALAYSIA. HE SAID THAT THE GOM WOULD NEVERTHELESS CONTINUE TO GRANT ASYLUM TO THOSE WHO DID LAND IN MALAYSIA, AS THE PRIME MINISTER AND OTHER HIGH GOM OFFICIALS HAD ASSURED THE USG PREVIOUSLY, AND THAT REFUGEES WOULD CONTINUE TO BE ACCORDED HUMANITARIAN TREATMENT ON ARRIVAL AND WHILE AWAITING RESETTLEMENT.

7. COMMENT: I FIND IT ENCOURAGING THAT THE GOM IS APPARENTLY ATTACHING SIGNIFICANT IMPORTANCE TO THE FORTHCOMING MEETING WITH HARTLING AND WILL BE ADEQUATELY REPRESENTED THERE. THE DISCUSSION WITH ZAKARIA LEADS ME TO SOME FURTHER OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS REGARDING OUR OWN PARTICIPATION IN THE KUALA LUMPUR MEETING. FIRST,

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 H-03 IO-06 INR-05 CIAE-00  
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P R 081040Z SEP 78

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8088  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
USMISSION GENEVA  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY MANILA  
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KUALA LUMPUR 9571

LIMDIS

THE GOM SEEMS REASONABLY OPEN-MINDED ON THE IDEA  
OF A SUBSEQUENT, HIGHER-LEVEL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE,  
AND WE CAN EXPECT THEM TO LISTEN CLOSELY TO OUR OWN  
AND TOHERS' VIEWS ON THIS. WE KNOW THEY HAVE SOME  
RESERVATIONS, E.G., THAT AN INADEQUATELY-PREPARED  
CONFERENCE MIGHT RAISE GREATER EXPECTATIONS THAN IT  
CAN FULFILL, THAT IT MIGHT PROVOKE DISCUSSION OF  
OTHER, EVEN MORE SENSITIVE, REFUGEE SITUATIONS, ETC.  
HOWEVER, THEY NOW SEEM WILLING TO CONSIDER REALISTIC  
IDEAS ON THE SUBJECT AND WE AND THE AUSTRALIANS  
SHOULD BE PREPARED ACCORDINGLY.

8. SECONDLY, WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE A DIRECT APPROACH  
BY ASEAN OR BY INDIVIDUAL ASEAN COUNTRIES TO ADDITIONAL  
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COUNTRIES OF POSSIBLE RESETTLEMENT. THE ASEAN-EEC  
DIALOGUE WOULD SEEM AN IDEAL OPPORTUNITY FOR THIS  
AND MIGHT BE USEFULLY DISCUSSED AT THIS MEETING.

9. THIRDLY, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, TO PROMOTE OUR  
ESSENTIAL OBJECTIVE OF INCREASING RESETTLEMENT,  
OPPORTUNITIES GENERALLY, WE MJST SET THE EXAMPLE BY  
PLACING OURSELVES IN THE MOST FORTHCOMING POSSIBLE  
POSITION IN TERMS OF PROVIDING ADDITIONAL  
RSETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITIES OURSELVES, AND WE MUST  
BE ABLE TO SHOW THAT WE ARE CONTINUING TO TAKE  
REFUGEES AT A SIGNIFICANT RATE. WE SHOULD BE  
PREPARED TO DESCRIBE IN DETAIL OUR REQUESTED  
LEGISLATION FOR A PEMANENT LONG-RANGE  
INDOCHINA REFUGEE PROGRAM AND ITS PROSPECTS IN THE  
CONGRESS AS WELL AS THE EXTENT OF THE ADMINISTRATON'S  
COMMITMENT TO IT. IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, WE SHOULD  
ALSO OFFER THE PROSPECT OF ADDITIONAL CE NUMBERS AS

A RESULT OF COMBINING THE EASTERN AND WESTERN HEMISPHERE QUOTAS. MOST IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, WE MUST BE ABLE TO SHOW THAT OUR LRP IS FUNCTIONING. AS WE HAVE MADE CLEAR IN SEVERAL PREVIOUS CABLES, IF THIS MEETING SHOULD COINCIDE WITH THE SEVERE CURTAILMENT OF OUR DEPARTURES BECAUSE OF A LACK OF LRP FUNDING, OUR OBJECTIVES IN THE KUALA LUMPUR MEETING COULD BE SERIOUSLY UNDER MINED.

10. IN THIS RESPECT, WE UNDERSTAND FROM TALKS WITH COUNTERPARTS HERE THAT THEY ARE ALREADY CONSIDERING FURTHER RESTTLEMENT NUMBERS. FOR EXAMPLE, AN AUSTRALIAN IMMIGRATION OFFICER HERE TOLD US IN STRICT CONFIDENCE THAT AUSTRALIA WILL CONDUCT A PROGRAM REVIEW IN OCTOBER AND WOULD CONSIDER A PROGRAM OF 20,000 NUMBERS FOR THE YEAR FOLLOWING  
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THEIR PRESENT PROGRAM. WE HEAR THAT THE FRENCH EMBASSY IS REQUESTING A "MODEST INCREASE" IN ITS BOAT REFUGEE QUOTA FOR MALAYSIA, WHICH IS PRESENTLY 600 PER YEAR. (ZAKARIA SAID TO BE HE FELT THE FRENCH WERE NOT DOING ENOUGH). RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH CANADIAN OFFICIALS HAVE BROUGHT HINTS OF EXPANSION OF CANADA'S PROGRAM TO 50 CASES PER MONTH FROM MALAYSIA FROM THE PRESENT LEVEL OF 17-18 CASES PER MONTH. WE HAVE NO SPECIFIC INDICATION THAT ANY SUCH INCREASES WILL BE ANNOUNCED OR DISCUSSED AT THE KUALA LUMPUR MEETING WITH HARTLING, BUT THEY COULD BE.

11. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD THAT THE AUSTRALIANS HOPE TO IMPROVE COORDINATION BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND UNHCR BY TAKING CERTAIN PRESSING OPERATIONAL MATTERS DIRECTLY TO GENEVA AND BYPASSING LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE SAMPATKUMAR. THE AUSTRALIANS HERE ARE DISPLEASED WITH THE LATTER'S PERSONAL SENSITIVITIES AND WHAT THEY CONSIDER HIS FREQUENT UNRESPONSIVENESS TO THEIR REQUIREMENTS. WHILE WE HAVE OUR OWN OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS HERE WITH UNHCR, WE CAN LIVE WITH THEM AND DO NOT THINK WE SHOULD SUPPORT ANY AUSTRALIAN EFFORTS TO UNDER-CUT SAMPATKUMAR, EITHER AT THE MEETING WITH HARTLING OR IN PRIVATE SIDE DISCUSSIONS WITH HIM. WE HAVE NO DOUBT THAT COORDINATION CAN BE IMPROVED AND ARE CONSTANTLY SEEKING TO DO SO, BUT WE ARE NOT SANGUINE THAT THE REPORTED AUSTRALIAN APPROACH WOULD BE ANY IMPROVEMENT. THE GOM IS APPARENTLY SATISFIED WITH THE UNHCR, AS ZAKARIA'S REMARKS NOTED ABOVE MAKE CLEAR.

12. IN ANY CASE, WE AGREE WITH BANGKOK (REF C) THAT  
DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC OPERATING PROBLEMS SHOULD  
BE RESERVED FOR THE SECOND DAY, AFTER HARTLING HAS  
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LEFT. WE HAVE A FEW SPECIFIC MATTERS WHICH WE  
CAN DISCUSS BEFOREHAND WITH LOWMAN ON HIS ARRIVAL.  
MILLER

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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